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ABSTRACT

The possible existence of grade inflation at the Indiana University at South Bend was examined in this research study, along with possible differences in grades received between the divisions of Education and Arts and Sciences. Questions raised by the Division of Education Ad Hoc Committee on Standards at IUSB prompted the study. The sample consisted of 109 education graduates from the years 1971 and 1976. Major conclusions were drawn: (1) There has been grade inflation that closely paralleled that reported on the national level. (2) Elementary education majors had a higher GPA than secondary majors as a result of grades received in elementary methods courses. (3) Variations in grades received did exist between the divisions of Arts and Science and Education. (4) Differences in grades received were not evident in the division of Arts and Sciences between the years 1971 and 1976; therefore the grade differences are more obvious in the Education division. Recommendations are offered regarding monitoring grading trends, replicating the study, studying faculty attitudes on grading, examining grading standards in elementary methods courses, and possibly using an alternate system of grading for those methods courses. (LBH)

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DIFFERENCES AND VARIATIONS IN GRADES RECEIVED
AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND
BETWEEN THE YEARS 1971 AND 1976

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A cynical account of general grading practices today among institutions of higher learning would describe the C as an indication of attendance, the B as attendance with work done, and the A grade as attendance with work done on time. So few grades below C exist that they are not worth talking about. No one from the outside, looking at a student's grades, can have any real idea of what they mean. Possibly the most important variable for a student seeking a high grade point average (GPA) is not what he learns but what professors he encounters. (White: 24)

In recent years the trend toward grade inflation in colleges and universities has been on the rise both on the graduate and undergraduate level. This "grade inflation malady" is believed to be national in scope and affecting all areas of study to some degree.

Although further statistical studies are still being done, the phenomenon of grade inflation has thus far been fairly well documented. According to an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education, from "the early 1960's to the early 1970's, the number of A's awarded at a group of major universities more than doubled, while the number of C's fell by almost half." By raising all grades it has simultaneously eliminated the differentiating function of grades while

carrying the extra advantage of convincing all students to believe themselves academically masterful. (Aristides: 492)

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

At Princeton University during the fall term of 1974-75, nearly 70% of the total grades were A's and B's. Seventy-six percent of Duke University's undergraduates received A's and B's in the fall of 1974. Almost 60% of the grades given University of Florida students in the winter of 1974 were higher than C. (U. S. News & World Report: 28) College transcripts are becoming so crowded with A's and B's that chapters of Phi Beta Kappa are reported to be raising the minimum grade average required, to safeguard the honor society's traditional exclusivity. (Etzioni: 101)

In the typical scale, A and B are above average grades, C is average, and D and F are below average. Thus, the majority of college grades should fall in the C category, with a smaller number of grades above and below designating superior or inferior performance. The incidents cited above and the findings of on-going studies indicate that this is not the current pattern among colleges and universities in America today. (Cady: 441-45)

If half of all college grades assigned are A's and B's, does this mean that there are more superior students in college than average students? Scores in the Scholastic Aptitude Test

(SAT), taken annually by about 1.4 million college bound high school seniors, do not lead to this conclusion. Most SAT's reveal that the majority of college freshmen lack adequate preparation. Do poorly prepared students suddenly blossom academically and a majority become superior students? Of course, this is a ridiculous idea. Nobody seems to have a complete explanation of why the variation between the SAT scores and college grades is so wide, but it does lead to a serious question concerning the reliability of present college grading practices. (Cady: 444-45)

The phenomenon of grade inflation itself has many possible causes. It is traced by many educators back to the Vietnam War. Nathaniel S. Preston, vice-president for academic affairs at American University in Washington, D.C., said that during the Vietnam war period a low grade, for example, might mean the loss of draft exemption--perhaps even death on the battlefield. Superintendent Billy Reagan of the Houston Independent School District in Texas, sees the problem of grade inflation as beginning in elementary school with "social promotion"--the practice of passing pupils to higher grades and allowing them to graduate whether they have learned the required material or not. Many teachers believe universities are giving out high grades today to make sure students get into graduate school or land good jobs. (U. S. News & World Report: 28)

One possible cause may have to do with the national

economic situation. As many colleges have found it financially difficult to keep their doors open, they may have lowered their policy or requirements for admission resulting in lower grading standards.

Inflation, then, apparently is not restricted to the economy as in "economic inflation". Colleges across the country have begun to take notice of an overall marked increase in their GPA's. Indiana University at South Bend as well is experiencing inflation. (Preface A)

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recent articles in the Preface which focused on the national "grade inflation" malady indicated the possibility of significant differences in the GPA's of the undergraduate Divisions of Education and of Arts and Sciences at IUSB. The purpose of this study was to determine whether grade inflation had actually occurred and whether there were differences in grades received during the five-year period, 1971 through 1976.

HYPOTHESES

The major question investigated asked, "Is there grade inflation at IUSB?" In the null form, Hypothesis I was: "There are no differences between the quality points or grade point averages of the 1971 and 1976 elementary and secondary education graduates."

There were in addition two other questions relating specifically to grade inflation. The first was concerned with the consistency of grades received within the Division of Education. In the null form, Hypothesis II stated: "There are no differences in GPA's between elementary and secondary majors." The second question was concerned with differences in grades received between the Divisions of Arts and Sciences and Education. Again, in null form, Hypothesis III stated: "There are no differences in GPA's between the Divisions of Arts and Sciences and Education."

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Some of the terms employed in this study which may need some clarification were defined as follows:

Grade. The unit of measure which serves as a means of exchange for the purpose of establishing a value for the untried product--the student. (Davidson: 122)

Grade inflation. To inflate the unit of measure. To change the rate of exchange, thereby putting the abler student at a disadvantage and lowering the reputation of the institution. (Davidson: 122)

Grade inflation at IUSE. Specifically defined for this study, grade inflation at IUSE is statistically significant differences (.05) in grades received between the years 1971 and 1976 and between the Divisions of Arts and Sciences and Education.

Grade point average (GPA). A measure of average scholastic success in all college courses taken by a student during a certain term or semester, or accumulated for several terms or semesters. It is obtained by dividing quality points by hours of course work taken when course marks are weighed by the following system: A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, and F=0. (Good: 53)

Level. A measure of educational maturity: freshman (0 to 31 hours), sophomore (32-61 hours), junior (62-91 hours), and senior (92 to 120 hours). (Good: 263)

Major (area). Courses selected from a department's offerings as a requirement for specialization in preparation for teaching in that area or as professional preparation for graduation or certification. (Good: 348)

Quality points (QP). Points assigned to grades for the purpose of determining the grade point average as follows: A=4 points, B=3 points, C=2 points, D=1 point, and W/F=0 points. No points are assigned for I, P, or W. (Good: 263)

LIMITATIONS

Since almost all of the courses taken by education students during the first two years are drawn from the Division of Arts and Sciences and the majority of the course work for the secondary education student is drawn from the Division of Arts and Sciences, it was assumed that the recorded grades of education majors would be representative of both the Education Division and the Division of Arts and Sciences (secondary education majors). Although, according to previous studies, grade inflation began in the middle 1960's this study was only concerned with the 1971 and 1976 graduates from the Division of Education.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Sample. Subjects were taken from the Division of Education graduation lists of 1971 and 1976. Total populations were used to represent those who were certified in elementary and

secondary education. Transfer students and special education majors were not included in the sample. A total of 109 graduates were the subjects of this research.

Data Collection. A data collection card was designed to gather pertinent information from the files of the Education Office at IUSB. (Appendix) Quality points and hours completed were recorded for each level; freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. The first and last grades were taken for specific courses and selected major areas: English Writing, Literature, Education F100 and P280 (Introduction to Teaching and Educational Psychology), Science, and Social Studies. The grade point average for all education methods courses and the first 17 to 21 hours taken in the secondary major area were also recorded on the data collection card.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature dealt with in this study was divided into two parts. The first is concerned with the presence and implications of grade inflation. The second part focuses on the wide variations in grading practices among instructors, within sections and across departments. Particular attention was paid to the Department of Education when examining variations in grading practices.

GRADE INFLATION: ITS PRESENCE AND PROBLEMS

Historical Aspects. For decades, grades have been under criticism, their limitations discussed from every point of view. Yet they do--or until recently did--serve as a useful differentiating tool. (Aristides: 497)

Grade inflation began in the enrollment and program expansions of the 1960's. The idea that college should be open to everyone eased faculty and administrative attitudes toward grading. There was evidence that many students were entering better prepared. Test scores were up; proficiencies encouraged the acceleration or elimination of beginning courses; freshmen were propelled by a sense of selective admission. However, this assumption about freshman preparation has lasted into a period when the statistics no longer

support it. (Davidson: 122)

Although grades are getting better and better, there is little evidence that students are getting smarter and smarter. Scores in the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT), taken annually by about 1.4 million college-bound high school graduates, have been on the decline for years.

Educators do not have a complete explanation for the variation between the SAT test scores and college grades. However, the phenomenon of grade inflation itself is traced by many to the Vietnam War. (U. S. News & World Report: 28) The most frequently offered theory is that professors became more lenient graders in the late sixties, to prevent students from being drafted and sent to Vietnam. (Preface: A) In addition, there seems little doubt that the pass-fail option has contributed significantly to higher grade averages. According to Professor Arvo E. Juola of Michigan State University, the boom period for the installation of this grading innovation was during the years 1967-1971. (Juola: C4) Students were allowed to take traditionally difficult courses on the pass-fail option thereby insuring themselves higher GPA's. This period saw other curricular revisions that decreased requirements or the number of courses taken in a term. (Davidson: 124) Some trace the problem back to the late forties, when the GI Bill opened colleges up to millions of veterans to keep them off the job market. Finally, outside pressures also

complicate matters, such as state standards for educators.

(Preface A)

Grade Inflation: The Scope and Extent. As evidence mounts that approximately two-thirds of the marks given in U. S. Colleges and universities now are A's and B's, reseachers have given serious attention to the phenomenon of grade inflation. (Davidson: 122)

Based on a sample of eighty higher education institutions, Juola reported:

Little change in grade averages from 1960-65 or from 1965-68. In contrast, a dramatic annual increase of .07 of a grade point occurred in the 1968-70 period, an annual rise of .06 of a grade point in the 1970-72 period, and a .03 of a grade point rise in the 1972-73 period. Overall, the colleges surveyed showed an increase in grade average from 1960 to 1973 which was equivalent to nearly one-half of a letter grade on the conventional 4-point grade scale, with most of the rise occurring since 1968. (Juola, 1974B: 1)

In addition, reported trends at the Ohio State University do not appear to differ significantly from Juola's findings.

(Ohio State University: 7)

Sidney Suslow, Director of the Office of Institutional Research at the University of California at Berkeley, notes that grades have shown a persistent increase since 1963, "from 2.49 that year to 2.94 in 1974" (A Report on an Interinstitutional Survey of Undergraduate Scholastic Grading, 1960's to 1970's"). (Aristides: 492) Suslow speculates upon no fewer than thirty "factors responsible for grade inflation" divided

into four categories (Student Behavior, Faculty Behavior, Changes in Grading Policies, Other Influences or Changes), and running from "intense competition for admission to professional programs" to "adoption of permissive standards for educationally disadvantaged students". (Aristides: 492)

Handleman examined the grades in all college courses at Broward Community College during the years 1963-1964 and 1973-1974. His results indicated that there had been an increase in the percentage of A's and B's given during this period. The proportion of students receiving an A rose from 8.7% in 1963-1964 to 12.6% in 1968-1969 to 17.11% in 1971-1972 and 21.2% in 1973-1974. (Handleman: 37)

Time magazine reports that in 1974 42% of all undergraduate spring-term grades at Yale were A's, and 46% of the senior class graduated with honors. At American University 75% of all grades in the spring of 1974 were A's and B's. At the University of Pittsburgh, the average grade was C five years ago; now it is E. (Time: 106)

It would appear that a few colleges have escaped the national epidemic of grade inflation. Kaufmann and Podell studied the distribution of grades in the spring semester at the senior colleges and community colleges at the City University of New York (CUNY) during the years 1971-1974. The pattern of grade inflation noted at other higher educational institutions was not evident at CUNY. The average

education grades by class standing given during the spring semester of 1967, 1972, and 1974 were not significantly higher increases. (Kaufman, Barry, and Podell: 62)

Similarly, no significant differences were observed in a study done at New College, Sarasota, Florida, in overall grade averages during the last four years. The grade averages remained at the B level. Percentages of A's reported in 1972-1973 were 27% and 28% in 1975-1976. Other grade categories also remained constant. (New College: 14)

It is interesting to note, that although grade averages appeared to remain constant, they had already achieved the "B" level of inflation.

Locally, grades at IUSB appear to be a bit below the national average. The average grade at IUSB in Spring 1975 was 2.86. Newsweek magazine claims that the average college grade is B. (Preface B)

Grade Inflation: The Problems. The research cited in the previous section indicates that grades of A and B are so common that the best students are no longer easily distinguishable from the mediocre. (Davidson: 122) With grades no longer an adequate measure, we are left for purposes of evaluation, with scores on standardized examinations and with what seems to be the quality of the undergraduate school. A reliance on standardized examinations and the prestige of certain colleges and universities can freeze the American

society further by closing off what has long been a traditional and heavily trafficked form of social mobility in America, that available through academic performance. If grade inflation is not reversed, if grades are not restored to their former function, the time will soon come when students not from upper-middle-class homes, or from a handful of special schools, or from select minority groups, will be locked out of American life. Such are the potential consequences of grade inflation. (Aristides: 497)

In contrast, another reaction to grade inflation is to accept it, even encourage it, taking the view that employers and professional schools should find their own means of selecting students, without depending on colleges to do the sorting for them. Grades then can be used primarily to encourage effort, reward improvement, or recognize personal development without attempting comparative measures of achievement. However, with the job market today, it is doubtful that many students will be content to release the colleges from the role of evaluator. (Davidson: 124)

White, in the Chronicle of Higher Education calls grading "corrupt", but regards screening as inevitable and outside testing as less desirable than college screening. (White: 24)

Grade Inflation: The Future. Current interest in grade inflation is concerned with whether or not the ten-year trend (1965-1976) is finally over. The answer according to a survey

only basis for our current grading practices, and even this historical basis has been according to Professor Juola, highly distorted. The wide variations in how practices are implemented within section, among instructors, and across departments leads Juola to the conclusion that many college level grading practices border on the chaotic, and as his data suggest, there appears to be little in the way of justification for the variation. (Juola: B 3)

Earlier research has tended to support the charges made by Juola. It has been shown that there is great variability in grading practices among instructors of the same subject (Thompson, 1958), among department or subject areas (Bass, 1951; Morris, 1953), and even among instructors and departments combined across years (Webb, 1959; Aiken, 1963).

(Aiken: B 823)

There are many possible reasons for such variations and changes in grading. Morris (1953) discussed nine suggested causes for differences in grading practices among college departments or schools, but only one factor, that of class standing of students (lower versus upper division), was studied empirically. This factor was found to have a significant effect upon the grading practices of several schools and departments, viz, higher average grades being assigned to upper division students. (Aiken: 823) It was found that, in the lower division, departments having lower

grade ranks tend both to be subjects that are required and to enroll more students. (Aiken: B 828)

The incisive question concerning grading standards is whether some departments do give higher grades--for the same levels of performance--than other departments. The difficulty in answering this question is implied in the phrase; "the same levels of performance".

Goldman and Widawski found that different grading standards exist for different departments within the same university. These differences suggest that grades per se are not a clear-cut index of academic prowess. Rather, the meaning of a student's grades depends heavily upon the selection of classes in different fields. Interestingly, those fields with the "best qualified" students i.e., (highest HSGPA and SAT scores) have the most stringent grading standards. This finding is in accord with Helson's (1947) adaptation-level theory which suggests that the assessment of human performance is rarely absolute; people are judged in comparison to their peers. If their peers are very highly qualified, then judgment is rigorous. (Goldman and Widawski: 389)

In general, marks based on tests and examinations are likely to be more reliable and provide better measure of achievement than those based on other types of observation. Marks based on the observation of student behavior in class are likely to be unreliable because they are influenced too

much by the student's personal characteristics. (Travers and Gronlund: 373)

Variations in Education. Kurtz and Bertin found significant differences between the grades obtained by students of Education in their Education courses, and those obtained in their Comprehensive courses, in their major teaching fields, and in their other Arts and Science courses. Mean marks in Education are consistently higher than those in teaching majors, Comprehensive courses and other Arts and Science subjects. These differences are due to marking practices in the colleges concerned. (Kurtz and Bertin: 74)

In accordance with Kurtz and Bertin, Ohio State University reports a higher percentage of A's in Education than in any of the five colleges of Arts and Sciences during the 1969-1974 period. In addition, the percentage of A's reported in Education is greater than that in any of seven other professional colleges in the University. (Ohio State University: 8)

Variations vs. Uniformity. It is perhaps significant that, so far as academic standards are concerned, those now enjoyed and maintained by scholars and teachers in the fields normally included in the arts and sciences were first established in earlier days when the necessity for educating all college-age youth was not so apparent as it is today. As a result of modern insistence upon educating everyone, a university's job has changed vastly in scope and purpose. (Van Cleve Morris: 328)

Solutions to the problem of an unreliable grading system are hard to come by. While it is well known that the present system is bad, the revisions seem to create as many difficulties as they resolve. Any restructuring will inevitably be weakened by professors who reject the role of the evaluator, or who use wholly different criteria for evaluation than their colleagues. In addition, the multiplication of evaluation systems will only increase the difficulty of anyone from outside the academic world using our sorting and selecting system. (White: 24)

Uniformity of use of a marking system depends on two main factors; the extent to which the system has been carefully defined and the degree to which the faculty are familiar with the definition.

At least three steps would seem to be needed to make grading rational. First, studies are essential to find out what is really happening. Second, a meaningful philosophy toward grading must be developed and this philosophy conveyed to all instructors. And finally, systematic safeguards should be developed to help implement decisions. Instructors must have information about college-wide and department-wide grading practices and methods. Otherwise, grades and grading distributions must reflect the idiosyncracies of individual instructors no matter how serious and sincere their intentions. (Juola: A 33)

To summarize, the grade given by any instructor to a student is based on several factors. Consequently, there is a wide variation in grading. (Edson: 315) Further, there is the question of what the individual student performance is to be measured against: The class, the school, the nation, the student's potential best, or is there some standard implicit in the subject itself? (Elbow: 223)

Grade variations and lack of consistent standards are topics currently being discussed at IUSB. According to Dr. Roland Garrett, "Grade inflation is not the problem, but the variation from instructor to instructor and from program to program should be cause for alarm." (Preface: B) Dr. Floyd Urbach stated, "For whatever reasons, undergraduate Education Departments nationally are known to give higher grades than other departments." (Preface: C) Dean of Faculties, Dr. Gerald Harriman, has taken steps to set up a series of round robin discussions between chairmen and faculty of each division. (Preface: C)

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The specific problem of this study stated in Chapter I was, "to determine whether grade inflation had actually occurred and whether there were differences in grades received during the five-year period, 1971 through 1976." The first hypothesis was tested by comparing the quality points or grade point averages of the 1971 and 1976 education graduates.

In testing the other two hypotheses, the GPA's of secondary and elementary students were compared and the GPA's of Arts and Sciences and Education courses were compared.

All statistical comparisons were made by use of a t-test. Whenever the null hypothesis was rejected, an * was placed by the t score in the Table.

HYPOTHESIS I

An attempt was made to find out whether grade inflation occurred on the different class levels between those graduating in 1971 and 1976. Therefore, a comparison of quality points was made. Table 1 shows that the quality points on the Senior level rose significantly from 1971 to 1976--precisely, 71.81 to 89.09. Also, the Freshman level quality points rose significantly from 70.65 in 1971 to 79.76 in 1976. The data

showed no significant difference between 1971 and 1976 Sophomores and Juniors. Thus, grade inflation appears to have occurred in Freshman level courses, as well as in Senior level courses. The rise seems to point to the grade point averages (GPA) of the educational methods courses. (See Tables 3 and 4)

TABLE 1. A COMPARISON OF QP'S BY CLASS LEVEL FOR 1971 AND 1976 GRADUATES

GROUP	1971	1976	DF	t	H ₀
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
Fresh.	70.65	79.76	105	2.22*	Reject
Soph.	81.81	88.09	105	1.42	Accept
Junior	92.29	94.38	105	0.95	Accept
Senior	71.81	89.09	105	2.87*	Reject
*significant at .05 level					

An endeavor was made to see if the total quality points of the 1976 education graduates were higher than that of the 1971 graduates. The table 2 data indicate a significantly higher number of quality points (351.10) for the 1976 elementary education graduates compared to 312.61 for the 1971 elementary education graduates. However, this difference was not true for the 1971 and 1976 secondary education graduates.

When the quality points of the elementary and secondary students were combined, there was again a significant difference indicating that grade inflation did occur for both groups

of education students between 1971 and 1976. This data agree with Sidney Suslow who noted that grades have shown a persistent increase from 1963 to 1974. (Aristides: 492)

TABLE 2. A COMPARISON OF TOTAL QP'S FOR 1971 AND 1976 GRADUATES (ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY)

GROUP	1971	1976	DF	t	H _o
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
Elem.	312.61	351.10	81	2.58*	Reject
Secondary	319.47	350.20	20	1.36	Accept
Elem. & Sec.	314.39	350.97	105	3.83*	Reject
*significant at .05 level					

Table 3 presents a comparison between the 1971 and 1976 mean GPA's of the major areas of the student. The approximately 17-21 hours of methods courses of the elementary education majors were compared to the same number of hours taken by the secondary education students in their major field.

When the mean GPA (3.21) of the 1971 elementary major area courses was compared to the mean GPA (3.60) of the 1976 class, a significant difference was found showing that there has been an inflation of grades in the elementary methods courses. However, when the 1971 GPA for secondary students in their major area (3.01) was compared to the 1976 GPA (2.88), no inflation was indicated.

The data agree with national trends reported at both Ohio State and Michigan State Universities. (Ohio State University: 8) (Juola: C 4)

TABLE 3. A COMPARISON OF 1971 AND 1976 GPA'S IN MAJOR AREA

GROUP	1971	1976	DF	t	H _o
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
Elem.	3.21	3.60	81	4.58*	Reject
Sec.	3.01	2.88	20	0.48	Accept
*significant at .05 level					

Table 4 presents data which support the existence of grade inflation at IUSB. Because P280 and F100 were the only education courses required of all education majors, both elementary and secondary, they were chosen for this study.

When comparing the GPA (3.17) of the 1971 class with the 3.82 GPA of the 1976 class, a significant rise was noted for P280. This was also true for F100. For the 1971 class, the GPA for F100 was 2.96, while the 1976 class GPA was 3.45. Thus, the data reveal a significant rise in grades for both courses during this period, which seems to indicate a rise in grades in the education department.

TABLE 4. A COMPARISON OF GPA'S FOR REQUIRED EDUCATION COURSES

COURSE	1971	1976	DF	t	H _o
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
F100	2.96	3.45	99	2.97*	Reject
P280	3.17	3.82	100	4.28*	Reject
*significant at .05 level					

In Table 5 the lower division (Freshman and Sophomore) GPA's for 1971 and 1976 were compared. As indicated by the

Table, there was a significant rise in lower division GPA's for the elementary education majors between the 1971 and 1976 graduating classes. However, the secondary majors did not experience any difference in GPA's for their lower division courses. The rise of lower division GPA's for elementary majors seems to agree with Table 1 where there was a significant difference shown between the Freshman quality points of 1971 and 1976.

TABLE 5. A COMPARISON OF 1971 AND 1976 LOWER DIVISION GPA'S

GROUP	1971	1976	DF	t	H ₀
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
Lower Division					
Elementary	2.52	2.76	103	2.24*	Reject
Secondary	2.44	2.70	20	0.98	Accept

*significant at .05 level

Table 6 data indicated that grade inflation was not evident in Arts and Sciences courses between the 1971 and 1976 classes when the first Arts and Sciences courses in four different areas (Writing, Literature, Science and Social Studies) were compared. There were also no significant differences between the 1971 and 1976 GPA's for the last Arts and Sciences course taken by the students.

Although in five comparisons the GPA's for Arts and Sciences courses were slightly higher in 1976 than in 1971, three times the GPA's were a little lower in 1976 (first and

last Social Studies, and last Science course). Therefore, it appears that there has not been inflation in Arts and Sciences courses between 1971 and 1976.

Goldman and Widawski state that different grading standards exist for different departments within the same university. This data may indicate more stringent standards in the Department of Arts and Sciences. (Goldman and Widawski: 389)

TABLE 6. A GPA COMPARISON BETWEEN FIRST ARTS AND SCIENCES COURSES OF 1971 AND 1976, AND LAST ARTS AND SCIENCES COURSES OF 1971 AND 1976.

COURSE	1971	1976	DF	t	H ₀
First	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
Writing	2.45	2.79	99	1.79	Accept
Literature	2.57	2.76	104	1.03	Accept
Science	2.37	2.56	105	0.95	Accept
Social St.	2.43	2.42	104	0.01	Accept
Last					
Writing	2.71	2.78	81	0.33	Accept
Literature	2.67	3.00	97	1.67	Accept
Science	2.74	2.45	95	1.42	Accept
Social St.	2.86	2.76	101	0.54	Accept
*significant at .05 level					

HYPOTHESIS II

In Table 7 the GPA of elementary methods courses (17 to 21 hours) was compared with the last 17-21 hours in a major field of Arts and Sciences taken by secondary education majors. In 1971, there was no significant difference between the two. However, in 1976 the elementary methods GPA (3.61) was signi-

ificantly higher than the 2.86 GPA for the Arts and Sciences courses of the Secondary major. Thus, these data indicate an inflation of educational methods course grades, but not Senior level Arts and Sciences grades, and reject Hypothesis II.

TABLE 7. A COMPARISON OF GPA IN MAJOR AREA FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY GRADUATES

YEAR	ELEM.	SEC.	DF	t	H ₀
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
1971	3.20	3.01	71	1.76	Accept
1976	3.61	2.86	30	3.81*	Reject

*significant at .05 level

The data in Table 8 disclose that there were no significant differences between the overall GPA's of elementary and secondary students either in the 1971 or the 1976 class. This evidence would support Hypothesis II that there are no differences in GPA's between elementary and secondary majors.

TABLE 8. A COMPARISON OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY OVERALL GPA

YEAR	ELEM.	SEC.	DF	t	H ₀
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
1971	2.74	2.66	71	0.71	Accept
1976	2.93	2.88	30	0.20	Accept

*significant at .05 level

HYPOTHESIS III

An effort was made to find out if there were differences

between GPA's for lower division courses and major area courses taken by the same student. The data presented in Table 9 show that the 1971 and 1976 major area GPA's for elementary graduates (3.21 and 3.63) were definitely higher than their lower division GPA's (2.54 and 2.83). This seems to indicate that elementary methods grades have been and continue to be consistently higher than lower division grades for the same student.

TABLE 9. LOWER DIVISION GPA'S COMPARED TO MAJOR AREA GPA'S FOR 1971 AND 1976

YEAR & GROUP	LOWER DIVISION	MAJOR AREA	DF	t	H ₀
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
1971 Elem.	2.54	3.21	108	8.12*	Reject
1976 Elem.	2.83	3.63	50	6.08*	Reject
*significant at .05 level					

A comparison was made to find out if there were differences between the GPA's for lower division Arts and Sciences courses and education methods courses (6 hours) for the secondary education students. According to the data presented in Table 10, in both 1971 and 1976 there were significant differences between the two. The significant differences remained about the same for both years but the lower division and the methods GPA's both became higher over the period of five years. The lower division GPA rose from 2.43 to 2.70 and the methods GPA rose from 3.19 to 3.60.

The GPA's of methods courses for secondary education students (3.19 and 3.60) are also quite similar to those of elementary methods GPA's (3.21 and 3.63). Refer to Table 9.

The data agree with the Kurtz and Bertin study which concluded that there are significant differences between the marks obtained by students in their education courses and those obtained in their Arts and Sciences courses (Kurtz and Bertin: 74).

TABLE 10. LOWER DIVISION GPA'S COMPARED TO SECONDARY METHODS GPA'S FOR 1971 AND 1976

YEAR	LOWER DIVISION	METHODS	DF	t	H ₀
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
1971	2.43	3.19	33	3.77*	Reject
1976	2.70	3.60	6	3.33*	Reject
*significant at .05 level					

To test further, the overall GPA's of the elementary education graduates of 1971 and 1976 were adjusted by removing the quality points and hours earned in F100, P280, and all methods courses. These adjusted GPA's were compared to the GPA's of the 17 to 21 hours of methods courses taken by the same student. The data presented in Table 11 indicate significant differences between the adjusted GPA's (2.63 and 2.77) and the methods GPA's (3.22 and 3.60) of both 1971 and 1976 elementary education graduates. Again, the data in Table 11 agree with the findings of Kurtz and Bertin (Kurtz and Bertin: 74).

TABLE 11. A COMPARISON OF ADJUSTED GPA'S TO METHODS GPA'S
FOR 1971 AND 1976

YEAR & GROUP	ADJUSTED GPA'S	METHODS GPA'S	DF	t	H ₀
	$\bar{X}$	$\bar{X}$			
1971 Elem.	2.63	3.22	108	7.58*	Reject
1976 Elem.	2.77	3.60	54	6.24*	Reject
*significant at .05 level					

The third hypothesis was rejected by the data in Tables 9, 10, and 11. All three null hypotheses formed were rejected by the study findings.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this research was to determine whether grade inflation had actually occurred at IUSB and whether there were differences in grades received between the divisions of Education and Arts and Sciences. The impetus for this study evolved from questions raised by the Division of Education Ad Hoc Committee on Standards at IUSB.

The sample studied consisted of 109 education graduates at IUSB from the years 1971 and 1976. Three hypotheses relevant to grade inflation were investigated. All three null hypotheses were rejected.

Hypothesis I: There are no differences between the quality points and grade point averages of the 1971 and 1976 elementary and secondary education graduates.

Hypothesis II: There are no differences in GPA's between elementary and secondary majors.

Hypothesis III: There are no differences in GPA's between the divisions of Arts and Sciences and Education.

CONCLUSIONS

Based upon an analysis and examination of the data obtained

from the testing of the three major hypotheses the following conclusions were drawn.

1. There has been grade inflation at IUSB which closely paralleled that reported on the national level.
2. Elementary education majors had a higher GPA than secondary majors as a result of grades received in elementary methods courses.
3. Variations in grades received did exist between the divisions of Arts and Sciences and Education.
4. Differences in grades received were not evident in the division of Arts and Sciences between the years 1971-1976, therefore the grade differences are more obvious in the Education Division.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The student research committee on grade inflation makes the following recommendations:

1. It is recommended that grading trends be monitored within the Division of Education.
2. It is recommended that this study be replicated when deemed appropriate and that its findings be made known from time to time.
3. It is recommended that IUSB undertake a systematic study of faculty attitudes on grading.
4. It is recommended that grading standards currently

employed in elementary methods courses be examined and that the findings of this examination be communicated to all instructors for the purpose of establishing more consistent standards.

5. It is recommended that consideration might be given the theory that elementary methods courses are measuring different behaviors than those measured in Arts and Sciences courses, and that because of this difference an alternate system of grading might be employed not unlike that used in the Student Teaching experience.

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APPENDIX

Ident No. _____ (office use only)

	Year	Cr.	QP
Freshman			
Sophomore			
Junior			
Senior			

COURSES	First: Year	Cr.	Qp.	Avg.	Last: Year
English (L)					
English (W)					
Science					
Science					
Social St.					
Social St.					
F-100					
P-280					

Major area of Study (certification) _____

Total Hours at Graduation _____

QP's _____ Average _____

Methods Crs. _____ QP's _____ Avg. _____

*Sec. Maj. (17-21 last) Crs. _____ QP's _____ Avg. _____

Student Teaching: Crs. _____ QP's _____

Notes: